

National Science Foundation

Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program
Accomplishment Report FY2012



Table of Contents

Table of Contents	1
Executive Summary.....	2
Organizational Structure.....	4
NSF Mission	4
DVAAP Program Office and Points of Contact.....	4
FY2012 Accomplishment Report	5
Recruit and Employ	7
HRM Division Outreach	7
Veterans Employment Program Activities and Outreach	8
Supervisor Training for Veteran Hiring.....	13
ODI Outreach	13
Building a Path to Future Hiring Success	14
Promote and Develop	15
Mentoring for Veterans.....	15
Veterans Buddy Program.....	15
Training and Development Opportunities.....	15
Accommodating Disabled Veteran Needs.....	16
CyberCorps: Scholarship for Service.....	18
Veterans Education for Engineering and Science.....	19
Wounded Warriors STEM Think Tank	20
The Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization	21
Agency Oversight	22
Program Execution	23
Agency Challenges	25
Plan Certification.....	26
Appendix A – Outreach and Other Events for FY2012	27

Executive Summary

The mission of the National Science Foundation (NSF) is “to promote the progress of science; to advance the national health, prosperity, and welfare; to secure the national defense; and for other purposes.” Diversity of thought is critical to the scientific process, which makes recruiting and developing a diverse workforce of world-class scientists and engineers a mission-critical priority. As with many agencies, veterans are underrepresented at NSF. NSF’s quest for a diverse workforce includes concerted efforts to recruit, employ, and provide advancement opportunities for disabled veterans, especially those who are 30 percent or more disabled. This report outlines specific examples of NSF’s efforts, accomplishments, and projected future pursuits in support of its Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program (DVAAP) during FY2012.



Recruit and Employ. During the past year, multiple organizations within NSF have engaged in a significant number of outreach activities, including the Division of Human Resource Management (HRM), the Veterans Employment Program Office (VEPO), the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI), and the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU). In addition to its extensive outreach, NSF also developed recruitment materials, sought out veteran candidates through multiple veteran-specific job candidate programs, and carried out several activities to increase internal organizational awareness.

Promote and Develop. To assist veterans in their development, in FY2012 NSF developed a pilot veteran buddy program and continued to provide mentoring to veterans. NSF also provided training opportunities through the NSF Academy and maintained multiple programs for disabled veterans to obtain reasonable accommodations. In addition, NSF funded research and education grants geared toward providing veterans with research experience and developing a better understanding of the issues veterans face as they transition out of the military.

Oversight and Program Execution. The DVAAP achieved positive audit results this past year. Audit findings indicated that NSF’s Veteran Employment Program was on track and no material weaknesses were identified during the assessment. Additionally, the audit helped VEP remain on track regarding planned activities. To further improve the program, NSF plans to engage in



Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program Accomplishment Report FY2012

several new activities, including setting aside more non-competitive positions for 30 percent or more disabled veterans and developing an exit interview process.

Agency Challenges and Progress. NSF is pleased with the progress it made during FY2012 in both hiring and retaining disabled veterans at the Foundation, having increased its total number of disabled veterans onboard. Because less than .1% of veterans have the necessary qualifications in science and engineering for the bulk of NSF's scientific jobs, veteran recruitment is challenging for NSF. Nevertheless, the agency continuously seeks to improve its opportunities for veterans and disabled veterans. NSF plans to continue pursuing several actions proposed in the FY2013-2015 VEP Operational Plan and the FY2012-14 DVAAP Plan to help with veteran recruitment and advancement moving forward.

NSF understands that to continue to be the Federal Government's leader in promoting excellence in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics research and education, it must recruit, employ, promote, and develop a diverse professional staff at all levels that reflects the rich makeup of our national culture. By continuing DVAAP's successful FY2012 programs and pursuing additional activities outlined in NSF's DVAAP Plan FY2012-2014 (FY2013 Update), NSF hopes to steadily increase its number of veteran hires and internal promotions.

Not only do we value our veterans' capabilities in specific areas, but we respect and learn from the considerable experience they bring, through knowledge of other cultures and how we as a nation are perceived by other cultures. This is very important to our success as a nation among nations.

So let me say to our veterans: Your experiences and knowledge are assets. They're precious commodities, not just for you, but for the National Science Foundation and the nation. You bring special value to an increasingly global, international arena.

— Dr. Cora Marrett, Deputy Director, National Science Foundation, November 2011



Organizational Structure

NSF Mission

The mission of the National Science Foundation (NSF) is “to promote the progress of science; to advance the national health, prosperity, and welfare; to secure the national defense; and for other purposes.” To achieve its mission, NSF directs and funds programs of foundational research in all sciences and fields of engineering, excluding the medical sciences. The research findings produced are then used to address critical issues facing the nation. And, by ensuring that all research is conducted in educational settings, NSF is also developing the nation’s next generation of scientists and engineers. Diversity of thought is critical to the scientific process, which makes recruiting and developing a diverse workforce of world-class scientists and engineers a mission-critical priority.

DVAAP Program Office and Points of Contact

The Veteran Employment Program Office works closely with the Division of Human Resource Management and the Office of Diversity and Inclusion. Points of contact for these three organizations are provided below.

Veteran Employment Program Office

Name: Eric Bell
Title: Veteran Employment Program Coordinator
Email: eabell@nsf.gov
Telephone: (703) 292-8449

Division of Human Resource Management

Name: Nancy Roddy
Title: Veteran Employment Program Director
Email: nroddy@nsf.gov
Telephone: (703) 292-4388

Office of Diversity and Inclusion

Name: Claudia Postell
Title: Director, Office of Diversity and Inclusion
Email: cpostell@nsf.gov
Telephone: (703) 292-8020



FY2012 Accomplishment Report

NSF is committed to promoting diversity across the agency. The NSF Strategic Plan emphasizes the Foundation's goal of broadening the base of participation within the science and engineering enterprise and among NSF employees both in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) and in business operations.

The NSF Strategic Plan also discusses NSF core values, which are essential and enduring tenets that influence each person in the organization and support the NSF mission. One of the core values identified in the NSF Strategic Plan describes an organization that is *Broadly Inclusive* in seeking and including contributions from all sources while reaching out with a particular emphasis on underrepresented groups.

Additionally, the core values of *Dedication to Excellence* and *Learning and Growing* apply across NSF. These values promote recruiting and training a workforce that is versatile, motivated, inclusive, and open to new learning opportunities. NSF is committed to developing and training a world-class scientific and engineering workforce that reflects the diversity of the nation.

These core values have many implications that span NSF human capital and scientific activities and include concerted efforts to recruit, employ, and provide advancement opportunities for disabled veterans, especially those who are 30 percent or more disabled.

NSF is strongly committed to helping place veterans in jobs. While hiring within the Agency is an important and obvious path to increasing veteran employment opportunities, NSF has also considered the topic more broadly, looking beyond its immediate organizational boundaries to identify other potential paths, including within the larger Federal government and the private sector. In FY2012, NSF formalized a three-pronged approach to increasing veteran opportunities. This approach includes activity through the following channels:

Internal Hiring – NSF has been and continues to be committed to veteran recruitment, hiring, and development within the Agency. During FY2012, NSF has continued to build on its previous success in veteran hiring.

Procurement Activities – Less directly, NSF also employs veterans and disabled veterans through contract awards set aside specifically for small businesses owned by these two groups. NSF expanded its efforts in this area during FY2012 and has plans to continue this expansion in the coming years.

Research and Education Grants – NSF's mission affords the Agency an additional venue for assisting veterans. Beyond seeking to be broadly inclusive in hiring efforts and procurement activities, NSF seeks diversity when providing grants for research and



Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program Accomplishment Report FY2012

education projects across the spectrum of science and engineering fields. In determining which research initiatives to support, NSF's merit review process considers a project's intellectual merit and impact, including the potential to broaden participation to the veteran and disabled veteran community.

In addition to increasing veteran employment opportunities through its three-pronged approach, NSF also engages in many other activities designed to recruit, develop, and promote veterans within the Agency as part of its Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program (DVAAP). The activities described in the following pages provide specific examples of NSF's FY2012 efforts and accomplishments in support of the DVAAP.

"The NSF core values are essential and enduring tenets that influence everyone in the organization and support our mission. NSF is:
***Broadly Inclusive*—seeking and including contributions from all sources while reaching out, especially to groups that are underrepresented, serving scientists, engineers, educators, students, and the public across the nation, and exploring opportunities for partnerships, both nationally and internationally..."**

– NSF Strategic Plan for FY 2011-2016



Recruit and Employ

Methods Used to Recruit and Employ Qualified Disabled Veterans, Especially Those Who Are 30 Percent or More Disabled

NSF's senior leadership recognizes the value of workforce planning as a component of excellence in management. Therefore, NSF regularly develops, updates, and implements a far-reaching Human Capital Management (HCM) Plan based on the agency's Strategic Plan. The

"The focus of NSF's [Veterans Employment Program] is to educate, coordinate, and collaborate with the NSF community to create career matches at the Foundation for veterans' employment in order to make maximum use of the knowledge, skills, competencies, and dedication that veterans can and do bring to the Federal workforce."
— NSF Human Capital Management Plan

HCM Plan provides an integrated framework of policies and practices to guide NSF in meeting its workforce needs and to enable NSF to excel as an organization.

The HCM Plan incorporates the NSF-level workforce and succession plans and implements strategies related to recruitment, professional development, retention, and effective human

capital processes and tools to promote a diverse workforce at NSF. It articulates an agency-wide human capital vision, identifies human capital goals, and describes NSF's workforce composition and human capital challenges. Working within this framework, NSF has created ways to introduce veterans to NSF and eventually recruit and hire those most qualified to help the agency meet its mission.

NSF's veteran recruitment and outreach efforts span several divisions and programs, including the Division of Human Resource Management (HRM), the Veterans Employment Program (VEP), and other offices at the Foundation. These efforts to source and recruit veterans to NSF are detailed below.

HRM Division Outreach

HRM makes every effort to build an inclusive framework within its employee programs to ensure that a diverse and representative population is contacted during outreach, recruitment, and selection efforts. Additionally, programs are designed to effectively develop and retain these employees in order to ensure that NSF can sustain its operations and accomplish its national mission of leadership in STEM research and education.

HRM staff ensure that NSF employment opportunities are widely distributed. To achieve this objective, NSF utilizes the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) USAJOBS website to advertise job opportunities government-wide and to public audiences. In addition, HRM



manages a program called “NSF Updates,” which allows individuals interested in NSF employment, including those in the veteran community, to receive automatic electronic notification of program and job opportunity announcements.

Team to Invigorate Marketing and Outreach

During FY2009, the HRM Division conceptualized and chartered the Team to Invigorate Marketing and Outreach (TIMO) for the Foundation. Executive level champions for the team include the Director and Deputy Director of HRM and the Director of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI). Some FY2012 examples of TIMO’s work directed toward veterans included:

- The Veterans Employment Program (VEP) Internal Working Group (discussed in more detail below)
- Veteran employee recruitment at numerous events such as the VA Employment Commission Career Fair, the DOD Hiring Heroes Career Fair, multiple Operation War Fighter (OWF) Job Fairs, and other veteran outreach events

HRM and TIMO staff members participated in 28 outreach events for veterans and disabled veterans during FY2012. For a list of relevant events, please refer to **Appendix A**.

Veterans Employment Program Activities and Outreach

NSF chartered a Veterans Employment Program (VEP) in March 2010 in response to Executive Order 13518 and also identified a VEP Director at that time. NSF then developed and provided OPM with the VEP Operational Plan in April 2010 and hired a VEP Coordinator in May of that year. Since then, VEP has become an integral and effective part of veteran recruitment and hiring efforts at NSF.

In FY2012, VEP established and participated in a variety of activities meant to promote NSF awareness of the value of veteran employees and to share ways to recruit and hire them. VEP has also worked to develop relationships with other Federal agencies, veterans associations, and individual veterans in order to identify qualified future employees. Below are some specific examples of the productive activities pursued by VEP over the past year.



Frequent Briefings with Senior Leaders and Managers

As in the previous fiscal year, in FY2012 the VEP Coordinator met with and briefed representatives of senior management in all Directorates and Offices on veteran hiring practices and ways to incorporate veterans into the workforce. The VEP Coordinator also spoke at staff meetings to engage lower-level managers, promote NSF veteran hiring goals, and educate employees on the benefits and accomplishments of veteran staff.

VEP Working Group

The FY2010-FY2012 VEP Operational Plan suggested that NSF explore the creation of a Veterans Advisory Group “to strategize ideas to enhance program support and activities.” While VEP has been making great strides in meeting the objectives of the Operational Plan, HRM recognized the value of bringing in stakeholders from across the Foundation to inform, coordinate, and advance the initiatives. As a result, the VEP Director recommended the establishment of a cross-functional Veterans Employment Program Working Group. Officially chartered in February 2011, the primary purpose of the VEP Working Group is to provide NSF stakeholder input in the implementation of the VEP Operational Plan and to offer advice in areas such as:

- Engaging the NSF workforce and hiring managers in VEP initiatives
- Attracting veterans to work at the Foundation
- Reviewing VEP training and marketing materials
- Developing a buddy program for new veteran hires
- Connecting new veteran hires to veteran mentors in the NSF Mentoring Program
- Creating innovative recruitment methods for veterans, particularly disabled veterans, and for military spouses

The VEP Working Group released semi-annual reports in FY2012, detailing the status of the group’s recommendations and information about Operational Plan objectives. The VEP Working Group also organized two very successful commemoration events for Memorial Day and Veterans Day as well as multiple outreach events (these events are described in more detail later in this document; see also **Appendix A**). Based on its success and demonstrated utility, NSF chose to extend the VEP Working Group’s charter another year (through March 2013).

Relationships with Other VEP Coordinators

During FY2012, the VEP Coordinator has built close relationships with veteran employment teams at other Federal agencies to share information, lessons learned, and veteran job candidates from their databases. This past year the VEP Coordinator worked closely with peers at the Agency for International Development (USAID) as well as the Departments of Labor, Defense, and Homeland Security.



Veteran Candidate Pool Programs



During the past year, the VEP Coordinator has proactively pursued involvement with programs designed to place veterans in jobs. He has worked with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to roll out a new veterans-only resume database that is currently being developed. The VEP Coordinator currently has access to the database and hiring managers across the Agency will have access to it when it is formally rolled out in FY2013.

In addition, VEP also began the process of working with OPM's Vets 2 Feds Internship Program. Through this program, veteran job candidates are vetted through OPM and then submitted to agencies for hire. Using this program, NSF was able to select a veteran for an IT position in September 2012. NSF is hopeful that more STEM candidates will be in the program next year.

Non-Paid Work Experience Program

In March 2011, the Department of Veterans Affairs approved NSF to participate in its Non-Paid Work Experience Program (NPWE) to help engage disabled veterans in Federal careers. NPWE provides NSF an opportunity to train, mentor, and assist veterans in pursuing a career path at NSF. When FTEs become available, hiring officials can contact HRM representatives to pursue candidates through this program.

NPWE has proven to be a highly effective and sought after program at NSF. In FY2012, NSF had three veterans participate in the program and one hire. (Since inception in March 2011, NSF has had eight veterans participate in the program and four have been hired into four different NSF offices.) The VEP Coordinator briefed hiring managers about the program throughout the year, and management is committed to requesting veterans through the program. In fact, the VA has been unable to keep up with current NSF demand. VEP considers NPWE to be a great success story for the Foundation and looks forward to continuing to recruit and ultimately employ veterans using this program.

NPWE Success Since Inception:
Total Veterans Working Under NPWE: 8
Total Hired into Permanent Positions: 4

Outreach Activities

In addition to the activities described above, the VEP office participated in many outreach activities and events to help veterans in their overall career searches as well as to recruit them to NSF.



Career and Resume Counseling

Last year the VEP Coordinator collaborated with HRM personnel to develop a Federal resume builder template with questions that help veterans communicate their career experience in a resume format. This resume builder has been posted on the



VA for Vets website. During FY2012, the VEP Coordinator continued to counsel individual veterans using the resume builder and also distributed it with directions to external veteran stakeholders. In addition, the VEP Coordinator used and distributed the following career counseling materials: career information web resources such as links for the VA for Vets and Feds Hire Vets websites, a checklist for applicants, and sample performance-based interview questions.

NSF Website Career Pages

VEP continued to maintain a “Programs for Veterans” section on the NSF career webpage, which includes information about Veterans Preference, special hiring authorities for veterans, electronic forms, and contact information. In order to connect the content more broadly to external resources and expand the scope of accessible information to potential hires, the “Programs” section also includes content for veterans and persons with disabilities as well as links to relevant websites such as Feds Hire Vets.



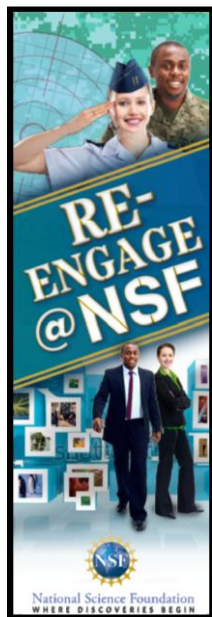
Targeted Outreach and Diversity Promotion Activities

The VEP Coordinator, HRM specialists, and TIMO representatives conducted outreach activities at many conferences and events in support of NSF’s efforts to increase diversity. The activities listed below are samples of the events that targeted veterans, disabled veterans, or persons with disabilities:

- VA Employment Commission Career Fair Annual Federal Cyber Service: Scholarship for Service (SFS) Job Fair
- VA for Vets Career Fair
- Expo Operation War Fighter (OWF) Job Fair
- Maryland Employment Office Career Fair
- The Resource Foundation for Women Veterans & Student Veterans Club Hiring Fair
- Pentagon Washington Area Job Fair

A complete list of relevant events attended can be found in **Appendix A**.





Outreach to College and University Career Centers

In addition to attending career fairs and other recruiting events, NSF is also working directly with colleges and universities with curricula in STEM and business and operations to encourage veterans and disabled veterans to apply for NSF internships and permanent positions. During FY2012, the VEP Coordinator contacted career centers at Howard University and the University of Maryland to solicit resumes of veteran students.

Outreach Marketing Materials

This past year, VEP developed new promotional outreach materials, including a veteran-friendly brochure depicting three veteran NSF employees in uniform as well as a complementary veteran-friendly banner display with a design similar to the new brochure.

Greater Web Presence for Job Postings

Beyond USA Jobs, VEP has posted job announcements on the Feds Hire Vets website this past year, and the VEP Coordinator also participates in the Vet-Net group on LinkedIn.

Internal Awareness Activities

Over the past several years, VEP has initiated several events and programs geared toward increasing internal awareness of the importance of recruiting and including veterans and disabled veterans at the Foundation.

Internal Visibility

NSF is working to create greater visibility for veteran hiring by recognizing successful veteran-related hiring and other activities. For example, in FY2012 NSF recognized its first Veteran Employment Program Champion, Chantini Reid. NSF ran an article about Ms. Reid in the NSF newsletter, the *Weekly Wire*, and also recognized Ms. Reid at the Veterans Day Commemoration Event on November 7, 2012.

Additionally, NSF included spotlights on successful veteran outreach events on InsideNSF and the Announce Channel, and NSF also developed and continues to maintain an internal blog dedicated to veterans.

NSF VEP Champion:



Chantini Reid (CISE)

Chantini has successfully become a driving force behind hiring veterans via the NPWE program within her office. She has worked to train veterans in areas of program assistance and has given veterans knowledge and experience that can be transferred to other federal agencies and private sector employees. Ms. Reid's efforts are exemplary of the opportunities the Agency seeks to provide veterans.



Veterans Day Event

In November 2011, NSF held its second annual Veterans Day Commemoration Event. The event included opening remarks by the NSF Deputy Director, a guest speaker, recognition of NSF veterans, and a demonstration by the Air Force Military Working Dogs. The guest speaker and working dogs gave the NSF staff a greater appreciation of what our veterans past and present have accomplished while protecting our country. The event was well-attended, and NSF plans to continue this annual celebration each year.

Memorial Day Event

VEP organized its third annual NSF-wide Memorial Day celebration in May 2012. NSF's Director and Deputy Director both spoke, and Dr. Ivan Ware, an original member of the Tuskegee Airmen, shared his remarkable experiences serving in the military. The program also included recognition of NSF veterans, one of whom sang the national anthem. As with the Veterans Day celebration, this event was well-attended and helped foster a positive atmosphere of recognition and inclusiveness for veterans at NSF.

Supervisor Training for Veteran Hiring

To ensure that hiring managers at NSF understand veteran employment issues and are equipped to take advantage of its veteran recruitment pipeline, NSF developed and launched a new training course, "Veteran Employment Training for Hiring Managers" during FY2012. NSF also promoted awareness of the training through flyers, the Announce Channel, and through email communication.



ODI Outreach

Members of ODI actively participated in many of the TIMO outreach events described above. In an event very similar to one held in FY2011, ODI staff again attended the Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services (DoRS) Job Club in April 2012 to talk to veterans and teach them about NSF and the career opportunities available at the agency. During this event, ODI staff spoke with veterans about how the Schedule A program works and what reasonable accommodations are available at NSF. They also focused on the different organizations within NSF that would assist veterans in providing those accommodations.



Building a Path to Future Hiring Success

NSF employs a highly skilled workforce with specific educational requirements for many positions. While it is possible to hire veterans and provide on-the-job training, certain positions within NSF require candidates with specific advanced degrees in science or engineering fields. To help equip veterans with these qualifications, NSF has pursued several programs to begin developing a “pipeline” of qualified candidates. These programs do not always impact immediate NSF veteran hiring goals, but may be an invaluable source of future talent.

Operation War Fighter (OWF)

Veterans who are currently going through physical therapy at their Military Treatment Center(s) can be eligible to participate in the Operation War Fighter (OWF) program after they are cleared by the OWF Program Manager. This program provides on-the-job training for veterans and allows NSF to use these employees to help fill short-term vacancies, such as those resulting from maternity/paternity care and reservist obligations. In FY2012, the VEP Coordinator briefed hiring managers and supervisors throughout the year on this program and also provided information about OWF at career fairs. In addition, the VEP Coordinator engaged in outreach activities at the Wounded Warrior Treatment facility at Fort Belvoir Community Hospital and at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda. NSF has yet to have success in recruiting veterans via OWF but continues to explore possibilities to utilize the program. During FY2012, NSF actively recruited interns for positions within the NSF Library and for other short-term positions within NSF, and will continue to do so.

“Veterans are returning from deployment with military training, experience with sophisticated technology, and often field engineering experience. The military has invested monetary resources in their training and veterans often have field-based accomplishments which should provide a smooth transition into science, technology, engineering, and math-based fields (STEM) upon their return from deployment.

- **However, veterans and post-secondary education do not uniformly understand how and when to connect the STEM experiences of military experience with a future career.**
- **Furthermore, when the veteran has incurred a disability related to military experiences there are even more barriers to this transition.”**

– “The Issues,” Transition STEM



Promote and Develop

Methods Used to Provide or Improve Internal Advancement Opportunities for Disabled Veterans

NSF is committed to working with veterans to provide job counseling, training, mentoring, and other internal advancement opportunities once qualified veterans are hired. By providing these opportunities, NSF seeks to promote and develop an engaged and dynamic veteran workforce to support mission goals into the future.

Mentoring for Veterans

In FY2011, the VEP Coordinator began coordinating with the NSF Mentoring Program to match new veteran employees with veteran mentors. This past year NSF continued to match veteran mentors with mentees, with the goal of supporting both professional development and retention among veterans. Mentors are able to discuss veteran-specific issues and concerns with their mentees and offer general advice about working at NSF.

Veterans Buddy Program

In FY2012, VEP developed a pilot buddy program to assist veterans new to government civilian service. Buddies selected to participate in this program are veterans with tenure at NSF, and these buddies assist new employee veterans by answering questions on various topics (e.g., culture, acronyms) and facilitating the acclimation process.

Training and Development Opportunities

The NSF Academy is a catalyst for the creation of a continuous learning organization. It promotes organizational excellence through the advancement of human capital and by proactively identifying and implementing the mission critical programs necessary for the development of all NSF employees. The NSF Academy ensures the highest level of achievement for all NSF employees by providing learning opportunities through a variety of educational venues.

The NSF Academy offers a wide range of training opportunities available to all employees at the Foundation, including veterans and disabled veterans. Veteran employees are provided the opportunity to enroll in any training offerings that interest them, are relevant to the work they perform, or help advance their careers at NSF. This past year, VEP and the Academy began a collaborative effort to begin marketing Academy training opportunities more directly to veterans to ensure that veterans understand the advantage of the NSF Mentoring Program and



other Academy opportunities. Some specific examples of training and development initiatives that are particularly relevant to veterans are discussed below.

Staff Engagement, Education and Development Initiative

The Staff Engagement, Education and Development (SEED) Initiative is a robust learning and development program for administrative professionals that was developed in FY2011. SEED helps employees determine the areas of learning and professional development that they want to improve, including (but not limited to):

- Oral and written communication
- NSF IT systems
- Working in teams
- Career ownership and development
- Analytical thinking
- Federal financial rules and regulations

“The Staff Engagement, Education and Development (SEED) Initiative empowers staff to develop careers that promote discovery and innovation and encourage professional growth, challenge, variety, and success.”
– SEED Vision Statement

By participating in these training opportunities, employees are able to focus on skill development, increase their effectiveness, improve their efficiency, invest in their personal goals, and enhance their motivation and morale. NSF veteran staff can enroll in these training classes to help prepare for the career they hope to pursue at the Foundation.

The After Hours Program

The After Hours Program is a competitive program that helps participating NSF employees develop skills for career goals targeted toward specific NSF positions. Program participants receive tuition assistance from NSF for courses taken on non-duty hours in Government or non-Government institutions.

Accommodating Disabled Veteran Needs

Supporting disabled veterans with reasonable accommodations is a critical mission ODI supports to ensure that NSF is in compliance with the laws and regulations governing Federal-sector equal employment opportunity (EEO) and civil rights. ODI’s accommodations support also helps foster a diverse and inclusive work environment that ensures equal opportunity through policy development, workforce analyses, outreach, and education. Many of ODI’s programs benefit the NSF disabled population, including disabled veterans, and help NSF provide an open and accommodating environment.

To facilitate the use of ODI’s services, the VEP Coordinator takes all new veteran employees to ODI as a regular part of their onboarding process. This approach ensures veterans know where to go if they need help with a disability that requires accommodation.



Job Accommodation Network (JAN)

JAN is a free, confidential consultative service provided by the Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy. Through this service, NSF ODI and disabled veteran employees can obtain any additional information required to appropriately accommodate disabled employees.

Computer/Electronic Accommodation Program

The Computer/Electronic Accommodation Program (CAP) is part of an interagency agreement with the Department of Defense to make assistive technologies available to the disabled workforce. This includes solutions to help employees who are blind or have poor vision, employees who are deaf or hard of hearing, employees with dexterity issues, and employees with a wide range of other needs. CAP can provide physical accommodation support such as new keyboards and keyboard trays; ergonomic chairs; monitor risers; or technological support, including speech recognition software, headsets and handsets, and screen readers. Veterans at NSF have the opportunity to take advantage of these solutions starting with an in-person needs assessment followed by a tailored response to meet individual requirements.



USDA TARGET Center

When identifying appropriate accommodation equipment, veterans at NSF can also visit the USDA TARGET Center. The TARGET Center will provide recommendations for the specific accommodation needed as well as ergonomics training and demonstrations for using different types of equipment. Veterans can also try out product options (e.g., ergonomic chairs) to determine which option will accommodate them best prior to NSF's purchase of the equipment.

Further Work Accommodations

Beyond modifying workspaces, ODI helps provide other types of support to employees. One such accommodation is the option for employees to telework or use Alternative Work Schedules (AWS) when needed. Additionally, electric scooters and wheelchairs are available in the main NSF building upon request. ODI also provides interpreters as needed. In FY2012, over 363 interpreter actions were carried out, including captioning work to aid disabled employees.



Internal Awareness Activities

ODI organizes events at NSF for National Disability Employment Awareness Month every year. Besides putting informational displays around the building, ODI plans and carries out events such as hosting speakers, running discussion groups, and planning activities to promote awareness and inclusiveness for disabled persons, including disabled veterans. On November 10, 2011, ODI hosted a seminar entitled, "Things You Wanted to Know About Deaf People but Were Afraid to Ask." The seminar addressed misconceptions as well as differences in culture and methods of communication, followed by guidelines to produce more effective communication.

NSF's Ongoing Commitment to Promoting Research, Education, and Career Development for Veterans

While NSF extends a great deal of resources toward recruiting veterans to the Foundation, NSF's scientific workforce makes that mission a challenge. However, NSF is committed to developing veterans outside the Agency as part of its three-pronged approach to advance overall veteran employment. As part of this commitment, NSF funds and provides the following programs to aid qualified veterans in pursuit of education and employment.

CyberCorps: Scholarship for Service

NSF has successfully run the Scholarship for Service (SFS) Program for eleven years. NSF works with over forty universities to identify qualified scholarship candidates working on Cyber Security degrees. As part of this program, NSF offers scholarship recipients two year grants that cover the cost of tuition, housing, books, and more. NSF also places students with agencies for internships before graduation. After graduation, NSF connects scholarship recipients with over 140 Federal agencies, departments, and branch offices where they are then recruited and required to work for at least two years as part of their award conditions. Over 1,500 awards have been granted to date, and the success rate in placing recipients is over 90%.



Many veterans have entered the program even though the scholarship does not focus specifically on targeting that population. Because there is no age limit on the scholarship and it can apply to senior level leaders, it has a large pool of potential applicants. The scholarship can also apply to a two-year technical degree or a longer B.A., M.A., or Ph.D. program, making it very broadly inclusive.



NSF attended the annual SFS job fair in January to meet potential employees, with a focus on veteran graduates, and is exploring the possibility of creating an internal cyber security position it could recruit from this pool.

Veterans Education for Engineering and Science

In April 2009, the NSF Division of Engineering Education and Centers held a workshop to generate ideas on how to encourage veterans to use their educational benefits toward opportunities that lead to careers in science and technology. The workshop brought together a diverse group of professionals from academia and business along with several Government officials and NSF program officers. The principal conclusion of the workshop deliberations was that NSF and other Federal science and engineering agencies should create an education/career development program focused on getting veterans into science and technology careers.

"NSF and other federal science and engineering agencies should create an education/career development program focused on getting veterans into science and technology careers. NSF and the other federal agencies have long experience sponsoring education research and activities. The cost to expand and enrich such programs is a small fraction of the cost of the post-9/11 veterans' educational benefit. Yet by expanding it, the community could engage a significant number of veterans with the potential to pursue careers in fields of engineering, science and technology."

– NSF Engineering Education and Centers Division Workshop, "Veterans' Education for Engineering and Science," April 2009

NSF decided to develop a four year pilot program with a budget in the range of \$100 million to \$200 million involving schools across the country that could develop new associate, bachelors and graduate level degree pathways for veterans in engineering and science. NSF then planned to take the lead in outreach and work in concert with the educational community, the VA, DOD, business firms, and Government organizations focused on science and technology, to develop the mechanisms for communicating with veterans regarding this opportunity.

In 2009 and 2010, a pilot program began with 17 "starter" grants issued to universities. Most of these projects focused on recruiting and retaining veterans in undergraduate programs; however, several awards were given to also engage veterans in graduate school. The pilot work at these schools is being monitored, reviewed, and improved as more data and information become available. This evaluation will help with the successful creation of veteran-focused educational opportunities. As the pilot continues, NSF hopes to increase the number of universities involved in the program.

Additionally, during FY2012, several other programs across NSF added a focus on veterans. For example, multiple programs within the Industrial Innovation and Partnership (IIP) and



Engineering Education and Centers (EEC) Divisions of NSF's Directorate for Engineering are designed to help veteran students and teachers obtain internship and research experience. The first program in IIP began in June 2011, with ten students in engineering programs each receiving \$8,000 from NSF to conduct research in their industries. In FY2012, 55 engineering students received similar assistance through this program and two additional programs. Although these students are not working at NSF, these programs help pave the way for them to explore science and engineering careers after graduation. In a similar vein, the Advanced Technological Education (ATE) Program and the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Talent Expansion Program (STEP) within the Directorate of Education and Human Resources have also directed funding to help veterans. NSF hopes to use these programs as a resource for recruiting and hiring qualified veterans in the future.

Wounded Warriors STEM Think Tank



The Wounded Warriors STEM Think Tank (Think Tank) is a think tank sponsored by NSF as a supplement to the Pacific Alliance for Individuals with Disabilities in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Partnership (Pacific Alliance) project. Hawaiian and other Pacific

Islanders are dramatically overrepresented in the US military compared to other groups, yet little is known about their transitional needs. Held in March 2012 at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, the Think Tank brought together industry and higher education leaders to find ways to support Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander Wounded Warriors interested in the STEM fields. Speakers and participants engaged in full-day discussions regarding transition, college, and employment with the goals of examining the needs of Pacific Islander disabled veterans who are interested in STEM careers and the support services currently available to them.

Discussants also identified Wounded Warriors who might be interested in pursuing STEM careers and developed guidelines to support these veterans in their pursuit of STEM education and employment. The Think Tank issued a summary report of the event and an action plan implementing its finding and recommendations.

Transition STEM Participants Included:

- Wounded Warriors, some currently enrolled in higher education institutions
- Leaders from STEM industries
- Higher education faculty
- Representatives of veteran programs
- Disability experts, researchers, and policy makers

***NSF's Ongoing Commitment to
Providing Procurement Opportunities for Veterans***



The Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization

The Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU) is another NSF organization committed to working with veterans. The Director of the Office, a veteran himself, has embraced a mission to help veterans find employment through government procurement.

Veteran Resource Library

OSDBU works with owners of small businesses to include their information in the Vendor Resource Library, an internal listing used by the Division of Acquisition and Cooperative Support (DACS) for market research and generating source lists for upcoming procurements. When procurements are released for work that could be accomplished by veteran-owned businesses, they are notified automatically.

Procurement Awards to Veteran-Owned Businesses

Procurement awards to veteran-owned small businesses for FY2012 totaled \$8.4 million, of which \$6.5 million was awarded to businesses owned by disabled veterans. As part of its three-pronged approach to helping veterans, NSF expanded this effort this past fiscal year by conducting a coordinated review of upcoming high dollar acquisitions for FY2013 and FY2014. Through this review, NSF was able to identify acquisitions currently procured through organizations other than small business and reallocate some of those awards as set-asides for small business, including Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business (SDVOSB) set-asides. In addition, NSF utilized the reverse auctioning tool FEDBID to target SDVOSBs for supply and simple service purchases.

Veteran Conferences

The Director of OSDBU attended multiple veteran small business conferences and expositions during FY2012, including the 2012 OSDBU Procurement Conference and the 2012 National Veterans' Small Business Conference. At these events, the Director speaks with attendees about opportunities at NSF and what it takes to work with the Foundation.



Agency Oversight

How the Activities of Major Operating Components Were Monitored, Reviewed, and Evaluated

When setting human capital goals, NSF understands the importance of benchmarking progress and making sure that the agency is headed in the right direction. NSF's *Human Capital Accountability Plan* details NSF's process for identifying the appropriate data and metrics to thoroughly evaluate all HRM programs, including veteran employment, with a specific focus on mission alignment, effectiveness, and compliance with all legal requirements and external mandates. In FY2012, NSF employed an internal accountability process that called for annual review and evaluation of the Foundation's veterans program and reporting requirements, assessing metrics and related data against program goals set at the start of the year, while also making necessary adjustments throughout the year.



NSF's Veterans Employment Program was assessed in FY2012 in accordance with the NSF Human Capital Audits and Assessments timetable. The audit findings were shared with the VEP Coordinator, the Staffing and Classification Branch (SCB) Branch Chief, the ODI Director, the HRM Division Director, the NSF CHCO, and the HC Accountability point of contact. The assessment included the following action items:

- The HRM Division Director reviewed assessment findings and oversaw the development of any corrective actions plans necessitated by assessment findings; and
- NSF Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO) reviewed assessment findings and corrective actions plans, and shared results of the audit with NSF senior management as appropriate.

The assessor completed a written report after completing the assessment, including an assessment checklist and summary of findings and recommendations. Audit findings indicated that NSF's veteran employment program was on track and that no material weaknesses were identified during the assessment. Additionally, the assessment helped VEP remain on track regarding planned activities for the remainder of FY2012.



Program Execution

NSF's Progress in Implementing its Affirmative Action Plan during FY2012

Thanks to the hard work of committed NSF employees, FY2012 was a successful year for veteran recruitment. The agency was able to accomplish many of the programmatic goals established in the FY2012-14 DVAAP Plan, implementing new programs and updating past initiatives to better serve veterans. Additionally, several areas for growth have been identified for FY2013, and HRM employees are dedicated to making these changes in the upcoming year.

NSF Progress

NSF is thrilled with the progress it made during FY2012 in both hiring and retaining disabled veterans at the Foundation. The agency was able to increase its total number of disabled veterans onboard from 25 in FY2011 to 33 in FY2012. Additionally, NSF was able to increase the number of all veterans onboard (both disabled and non) from 77 in FY2011 to 90 in FY2012, marking a 17% increase in one year.

All veteran employees:

- Onboard: *increased* from 77 in FY2011 to 90 onboard in FY2012.
- Accessions: *increased* from 9 accessions in FY2011 to 22 in FY2012.

30% or more disabled veteran employees:

- Onboard: *increased* from 15 in FY2011 to 20 onboard in FY2012.
- Accessions: *increased* from 4 accessions in FY2011 to 10 in FY2012.

Less than 30% disabled veteran employees:

- Onboard: *increased* from 10 in FY2011 to 13 onboard in FY2012.
- Accessions: *increased* from 1 accession in FY2011 to 4 in FY2012.



Areas for Improvement

While NSF is proud of its many accomplishments throughout FY2012, the agency is always looking to improve its opportunities for veterans and disabled veterans. NSF plans to continue pursuing several actions proposed in the FY2013-2015 VEP Operational Plan and the FY2012-14 DVAAP Plan to help with veteran recruitment and advancement. Some of these next steps and improvement areas include:

- Performing a workforce analysis to assess the progress of employees who are disabled veterans;
- Setting aside more non-competitive positions for 30% or more disabled veterans to increase the number of veteran opportunities provided by the Foundation;
- Developing an exit survey or interview process for separating veterans to identify retention challenges and prevent future separations; and
- Incorporating statements into performance plans for supervisors and managers, as appropriate, to increase their commitment to furthering equal opportunity employment for underrepresented groups.

By continuing FY2012's successful programs and adding new ideas from across NSF, the agency hopes to steadily increase the number of veteran hires and internal promotions. NSF understands that in order to continue to be the Federal Government's leader in promoting excellence in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics research and education, it must contact, select, develop, and retain a diverse professional staff at all levels that reflects the rich makeup of our national culture.



Agency Challenges

As discussed previously in this report and expanded upon in the FY2012-2014 DVAAP Plan, one of the most significant challenges NSF faces in its employment of disabled veterans is that the candidate pool is small for the bulk of NSF's positions. NSF's workforce draws in large part from doctoral scientists and engineers with significant research experience, a pool with very small veteran participation rates. According to the American Community Survey Data collected in 2009, there are over 21.8 million veterans in the country today. About 1.3 million of those veterans have science and engineering bachelor's degrees, which make up roughly 6% of the veteran population. Only 16,000 veterans have the requisite qualifications in a science or engineering field for the bulk of NSF's scientific positions, constituting less than .1% of total veterans. This means that at NSF, where hard science degrees are necessary for many positions, the potential pool of veteran recruits is exceedingly small.

Despite this key challenge, NSF is strongly committed to meeting the objectives of the Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program in a manner consistent with both NSF's workforce needs for mission accomplishment and the Federal Government's Veteran hiring goals. In fact, in FY2012, NSF made great strides in increasing the veteran and disabled veteran hires across the Foundation. Additionally, NSF recognizes that it can continue to improve its recruitment and hiring efforts to increase the veteran population at the Foundation. These strategies are detailed in the FY2012-2014 DVAAP Plan.



Plan Certification

This certification indicates that the program is being implemented as required by 5 CFR 720 and appropriate guidance issued by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management. Additionally, this agency has a current plan as required by the regulation.

Please type or print clearly. After an original signature is obtained, scan and return this sheet.

A. Designated DVAAP Certifying Official:

- 1) Name: Judith Sunley
- 2) Title: Division Director, Human Resource Management
- 3) Email: jsunley@nsf.gov
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B. Designated DVAAP POC:

- 1) Name: Eric Bell
- 2) Title: NSF Veteran Employment Program Coordinator
- 3) Email: eabell@nsf.gov
- 4) Telephone Number: (703) 292 - 8449

C. Plan Last Amended:

11/28/12
Date

D. Date Effective:

11/28/12
Date

CERTIFYING OFFICIAL SIGNATURE:

Judith S. Sunley

DATE:

11/28/12



Appendix A – Outreach and Other Events for FY2012

Event		Location	Date	Focus
Outreach				
1	Henderson Hall Career Fair	Henderson Hall	13-Oct	Veterans
2	TAP Manager's Alliance	Office of Personnel Management	16-Nov	Veterans
3	Junior Officer TAP Workshop	Henderson Hall	17-Nov	Veterans
4	EOP Careers and the disABLED	Washington, DC	18-Nov	Persons with Disabilities
5	VA Employment Commission Career Fair	Alexandria, VA	14-Dec	Veterans
6	Annual Federal Cyber Service: Scholarship for Service (SFS) Job Fair	Arlington, VA	5-Jan	Veterans
7	Fort Myer Transition Office	Fort Myer Arlington, VA	11-Jan	Veterans
8	VA Vets Career Fair and Expo	Washington, DC	18-Jan	Veterans
9	Meeting with VA Counselors	Washington, DC	1-Feb	Veterans
10	Meeting with OWF Program Manager	Alexandria, VA	2-Feb	Veterans
11	Operation War Fighter (OWF) Job Fair	Bethesda Navy Medical Center	15-Feb	Veterans
12	EOP Careers and the disABLED	Washington, DC	16-Mar	Persons with Disabilities
13	Maryland Employment Office Career Fair	Andrews Air Force Base NCO Club	28-Mar	Veterans
14	Operation War Fighter (OWF) Job Fair	Fort Belvoir, VA	30-Mar	Veterans
15	The Resource Foundation for Women Veterans & Student Veterans Club	Prince George's Community College	12-Apr	Veterans
16	Bowie State University Intern Career Fair	Bowie State University	18-Apr	Veterans
17	VA Dept. of Rehab Services	Alexandria, VA	24-Apr	Persons with Disabilities
18	MOAA Career Fair	Washington, DC	24-Apr	Veterans
19	Operation War Fighter (OWF) Job Fair	Fort Belvoir, VA	27-Apr	Veterans
20	Pentagon Washington Area Job Fair	Arlington, VA	9-Aug	Veterans
21	Andrews AFB Job Fair	Andrews Air Force Base Camp Springs, MD	22-Aug	Veterans



Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program Accomplishment Report FY2012

22	Hiring Heroes Career Fair	Prince George's Community College	13-Sep	Veterans
23	DOD Hiring Heroes Career Fair	Fort Sam Houston, San Antonio, TX	18-19 Sep	Veterans
Conferences				
1	National Guard Workshop	Office of Personnel Management	8-Nov	Veterans
2	Intel Veteran Employment Training (VET) Initiative	Alexandria, VA	9-Nov	Veterans
3	ICF International – Veteran Reintegration & Family Member Support	Washington, DC	15-Dec	Veterans
Internal NSF Events				
1	NSF Memorial Day Commemoration Event	NSF	22-May	Veterans
2	NSF Veterans Day Commemoration Event	NSF	7-Nov	Veterans

